



objectivity places him/her in a unique position in relation to the student. There are certain situations in which students tend to view their parents, their teachers, and their principals as authority figures—people they associate with expectations and the evaluation of their performance. It is in these situations that the counsellor, being in a non-evaluative position and outside the "authority" framework, is able to offer the student a unique kind of rapport and interaction.

In addition, there are children who bring certain personal or social problems into the school setting. These children often require additional and sometimes specialized attention. The task of the counsellor is to identify and, if possible, diagnose such problems, and either work directly with the student concerned on an individual basis or ensure that he/she gets help from the appropriate specialist.

The Counsellor's Team

Looking back over the various duties and responsibilities of counsellors, we see that they are required to be responsive on many levels and to perform a variety of functions: depending on the particular situation, they may be called upon to be part psychologist, part philosopher, part social worker, part friend. While it is true that counsellors are required to play all these roles at some time or another, it is important to remember that they do not accomplish this feat unaided, and almost never work alone. In every area of responsibility, their effectiveness depends on the contribution of a whole team of associates: the teachers, the principal, specialists in various areas, social workers, resource people in the community, and, last but not least, *you*, the parent.

The Parent's Role

As an authority on your child—the person who is most intimately acquainted with his/her interests, aptitudes, and aspirations—you are one of the counsellor's most valuable resources. You can contribute your insights and perceptions, shed light on a personal problem, and, most important, function as a source of encouragement and motivation. Without your participation, the counsellor's job is both more difficult and less productive. In short, your school's guidance services are most effective when you are an active member of the guidance team.

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Guidance for Today: Guidance Services in Ontario Secondary Schools



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The remarkable technological and sociological advances of the past few years have created a complex social environment that has resulted in a reassessment of traditional roles and attitudes. In this climate of change, the task of deciding "what you're going to be" has become infinitely more complicated than for earlier generations and, as a result, guidance has developed beyond the traditional concept of vocational counselling.

Guidance services in today's schools include *personal/social guidance* and *educational/career guidance*. Although there are guidance situations in which the two components function as separate services—as when a student is being helped with a problem of a purely personal nature—in the majority of cases they are so interrelated as to be aspects of one process. In helping a student shape his/her *educational* program, for instance, a counsellor must take into account the student's *personal* interests, capabilities, and preferences, his/her *social* values and attitudes, and his/her basic *career* goals and aspirations.

This approach to career counselling places a new emphasis on the *individual student* and his/her particular needs, interests, and concerns. Today the old signposts—a university education, the roles prescribed by sex, the prevailing economic structure—are no longer fixed guidelines but elusive variables that reflect the changing demands of a technology-based society.

In a world where everything is subject to change, guidance must begin with helping students understand themselves and the nature of their environment.

Why is this process of exploration and self-discovery so important for our young people? In encouraging them to discover their strengths and talents and to explore their potential, we are giving them the opportunity to develop the confidence and resourcefulness they will need to confront change and make the many decisions they will be called upon to make throughout their lifetime; in helping them understand and explore their environment, we are encouraging them to discover what their opportunities are and to explore ways in which *they* can best prepare themselves for the challenges of tomorrow.

The Role of the Counsellor

Within the framework of the foregoing objectives, the responsibilities of the counsellor are:

- to help students develop the skills required for effective and successful living
- to motivate students to plan ahead
- to help students become aware of the choices available to them
- to help students with informational needs

... to help students develop the skills required for effective and successful living

Self-reliance, resourcefulness, adaptability to change—these are some of the qualities that will be required of the adults of tomorrow, who may have to change jobs—and even careers—several times during their lives.

One of the roles of the counsellor is to help students develop the decision-making skills they will need to make the many decisions they will be called upon to make as new circumstances confront them throughout their lives. A major task of the counsellor is to help students recognize that making career choices in a changing world is a *continuous, developmental process*; the second is to act upon this knowledge by helping them develop the qualities needed to function effectively in an increasingly complex environment.

... to motivate students to plan ahead

It is in the nature of youth to live for today without much thought for tomorrow. One goal of the counsellor is to motivate students to plan ahead, to explore their potential, and to set their own goals in the light of this self-assessment. The intention is not to encourage young students to think in terms of specific careers or to make decisions that may trap them in a narrow field; rather, the counsellor's concern is to encourage students to think in terms of *general directions* or broad *career areas*, and to make educational choices that will give them a flexible foundation on which to build as their career goals become more specific.

... to help students become aware of the choices available to them

We live in a society in which our children enjoy the privilege of making free choices; the scope of these choices, however, is determined by their awareness of the alternatives open to them. An important respon-

sibility of the counsellor, therefore, is to develop awareness—awareness of career opportunities and of educational programs, awareness of trends in the labour force, and awareness of the world of work. If we expect our children to make intelligent, informed course selections, the task of building awareness of the options available in the working world must start very early in their lives.

It is in the context of creating awareness that the counsellor has a very special responsibility towards the female student. One facet of the counsellor's role is to alert the female student to her opportunities—to make her aware of changing roles in a changing world, and to encourage her to explore the many new possibilities that are now within her reach. A related task is to help and encourage the female student to develop appropriate attitudes towards herself and to think of herself as an individual human being with a unique potential.

... to help students with informational needs

The counsellor must keep abreast of the latest trends and developments in the job market, and be aware of the programs available at various post-secondary institutions. The task of the counsellor is to ensure that the student and his/her parents are aware of and have access to all the sources of information that are pertinent to the student's particular goal, so that choices may be made from the fullest possible range of alternatives.

Personal/Social Counselling

This area of guidance is surrounded by so many misconceptions that many parents adopt a defensive attitude at the very mention of "personal" guidance. In moments of parental defensiveness, we may be inclined to resent the role that the counsellor plays in personal guidance. As parents, we often feel that if *our* child has a problem, he or she should come to *us*. Or, if the problems concern education, the child should go to the teacher or principal. Of course there are times when children should go to their parents, when parents alone can give them the kind of comfort and support they require. And there are times when children should go to the teacher or principal, in situations where their particular advice or support is called for. But there are also times when the student needs the counsellor—a person whose impartiality and